

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00
XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /096 W
-----060025 121505Z /45

R 121200Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8240
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 6481

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, TS
SUBJ: NOUIRA STRIKES BACK, ROUTS HIS FOES

REF: TUNIS 6448

1. SUMMARY: IN MAJOR SPEECH TO PARTY LEADERS ON
SEPT 9, PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA EMPHATICALLY TOLD
HIS DETRACTORS TO OBSERVE PARTY DISCIPLINE AND TO STOP
UNDERMINING HIS GOVERNMENT AND POLICY. HE ADMITTED THAT
REVERSES OVER PAST YEAR HAVE CREATED ECONOMIC
DIFFICULTIES FOR TUNISIA BUT ASSERTED THAT THESE
PROBLEMS HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED BY MALICIOUS ELEMENTS
FOR THEIR PERSONAL POLITICAL PRUPOSES. HE CALLED ON
ALL SECTORS OF PARTY TO HONOR COMMITMENTS TO AGREED
POLICIES AND TO WORK WITHIN THE STRUCTURES OF THE
PARTY. IN MESSAGE SENT TO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, THE
PARTY LEADER WHO HEARD NOUIRA'S SPEECH REAFFIRMED
THEIR LOYALTY TO THE PRESIDENT'S "GLORIOUS PERSON AND
WISE PLICIES" WHILE EXPRESSING DETERMINATION TO
PUNISH HOSTILE ELEMENTS. NOUIRA'S STRONGLY WORDED
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SELF-DEFENSE, CLEARLY DIRECTED AT HABIB ACHOUR AND
MOHAMED MASMOUDI, INDICATES THAT HE HAS HELD HIS OWN
WITHIN THE PARTY AND CONTINUES TO ENJOY BOURGUIBA'S
CONFIDENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A TELEVISED SPEECH GIVEN TO PARTY LEADERS ON EVENING OF
SEPT 9, PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA EMPHATICALLY TOLD

HIS DETRACTORS THAT THEY MUST OBSERVE PARTY DISCIPLINE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE MANY RUMORS OF IMPENDING POLITICAL CHANGES AND WIDESPREAD COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE RISING COST OF LIVING BUT ASSERTED THAT THESE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES OVER THE PAST YEAR, SUCH AS THE DROUGHT AND LOWER WORLD COMMODITY PRICES, HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED BY ELEMENTS FOR "OTHER OBJECTIVES," I.E. THEIR PERSONAL POLITICAL GOALS. NOUIRA COUNTERED THE RUMORS OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, ATTRIBUTING THEM TO THE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT PERIOD TUNISIA IS GOING THROUGH AS IT SEEKS TO CARRY OUT THE FIFTH PLAN. HE CLAIMED THAT THE GOAL IS "MASTER OF THE SITUATION" AND THAT THE EFFORTS OF THE REGIME'S DETRACTORS WILL NOT "TURN US FROM THE PATH WE ARE ON." NOUIRA REFERRED BRIEFLY TO RELATIONS WITH LIBYA AND SAID THAT THE CRISIS THAT HAD CLOUDED RELATIONS WAS CLEARED UP, THANKS TO THE WISDOM OF BOURGUIBA. WITH A FORMULA FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE, NOUIRA SAID, RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED AND WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE.

3. NOUIRA THEN MENTIONED RUMORS OF THE RETURN OF AN "EX-SENIOR OFFICIAL" (I.E. MOHAMED MASMOUDI) WHICH PICTURED, THIS AS A "FRIGHTFUL EVENT" THAT INSPIRES "TERROR AND ANGUISH." NOUIRA SAID THAT THIS IS A QUESTION OF A POLITICAL DISPUTE THAT HAS BEEN DEALT WITH BY THE PARTY'S CONFIDENTIAL

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HIGHEST AUTHORITY AND THAT THIS EX-SENIOR OFFICIAL HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM THE PARTY FOR HIS CONDUCT, ATTITUDE AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION.

4. NOUIRA FINISHED HIS SPEECH WITH AN APPEAL TO ALL SECTORS OF THE PARTY TO WORK TOGETHER HARMONIOUSLY WITHIN THE ESTABLISHED STRUCTURES OF DIALOGUE AND TO HONOR THEIR COMMITMENTS TO THE ESTABLISHED POLICIES OF THE CONTRACT FOR PROGRESS AND THE SOCIAL COMPACT.

5. THE ASSEMBLED PARTY LEADERS APPLAUDED NOUIRA ENTHUSIASTICALLY (ACCORDING TO THE TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA. THIS MESSAGE EXPRESSED LOYALTY TO BOURGUIBA'S "GLORIOUS PERSON AND WISE POLICIES" BUT ALSO PROMISED THAT THE "HOSTILE ELEMENTS" WOULD BE PUNISHED. THE MESSAGE ALSO WARNED THE "BAD INTENTIONED ELEMENTS" THAT THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHATEVER RESULTS FROM THEIR EFFORTS AND DEMANDED THAT A STOP BE PUT TO THE "LYING STATEMENTS" IN CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS (I.E., THE UGTT WEEKLY ECH-CHAAB). WE ARE TOLD THAT SLOGANS SHOUTED AT THE MEETING CALLED MASMOUDI A TRAITOR AND DEMANDED ACHOUR'S EXPULSION FROM THE PARTY. ON

SEPT 10, L'ACTION ADDED A HEARTY SECOND TO ALL THIS IN AN EDITORIAL THAT SAID THE "SORCERER'S APPRENTICES" WILL NOT SOW DISCORD IN THE RANKS OF THE PEOPLE. L'ACTION CONTINUED THIS THEME IN A SEPT 11 EDITORIAL POINTING OUT THAT THE VERY AUTHORITY OF THE STATE HAD BEEN CHALLENGED. THE SEPT 11 ISSUE OF L'ACTION ALSO FEATURED A LONG ARTICLE ON THE "INSATIABLE" MOHAMED MASMOUDI THAT REVIEWED ALL HIS POLITICAL SINS SINCE 1956 AND ASSOCIATED HIM WITH VARIOUS ANTI-BOURGUIBA MOVEMENTS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TUNIS 6481

6. MOUIRA'S STONGLY WORDED SELF-DEFENSE, WHICH UNEQUIVOCALLY PUT THE TUNISIANPOLITICAL SYSTEM ON NOTICE THAT HE WAS NOT ABOUT TO RETIRE FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE, INDICATES THAT HE RALLIED THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AROUND HIM, UNDOUBTEDLY USING A BOURGUIBA VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ACCORDED HIM ON SEPT 7. THE SEPT 10 PRESS REPORTED THAT BOURGUIBA RECEIVED NOUIRA ON SEPT 9 WITH POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBERS SADOK MOKADDEM,TAHAR BELKHODJA, ABDALLAH FARHAT, MOHAMED SAYAH AND HABIB ACHOUR. WE UNDERSTAND THIS MEETING WAS HEDLD TO RECONCILE LEADING COMBATANTS AND TO IMPROVE CLIMATE WITHIN THE PARTY. THE SEPT 11 PRESS REPORTED ALSO THE MME. WASSILA BOURGUIBA HAD STOPPED OFF SEPT 10 IN TRIPOLI EN ROUTE TO MECCA. IN LIBYA SHE MET WITH GOVERNMENT SECRETARIES KHOULDI EL HAMIDI AND TAHA CHERIF BIN AMIR.

7. AT THE VERY LEAST, IT LOOKS AS IF MASMOUDI WOULD
NOT BE WISE TO TRY TO HONOR HIS PLEDGE TO RETURN SOON TO
TUNIS. HIS FORCES HAVE BEEN ROUTED AND NOUIRA HOLDS THE FIELD OF
BATTLE. IT IS NOW IMPORTANT TO WATCH FOR SIGNS THAT THE
PARTY IS FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THE PROMISE TO METE OUT
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PUNISHMENT FOR POLITICAL SINS COMMITTED BY ACHOUR AND
MASMOUDI. THE VICIOUSLY ANTI-MASMOUDI ARTICLE IN
L'ACTION, WICH ALERT TUNISIANS SAY MUST HAVE BEEN
WRITTEN BY MOHAMED SAYAH, INDICATES THAT THE PARTY
DIRECTOR ID ANXIOUS TO USE THIS AFFAIR TO STRIKE OUT
AGAINST HIS ENEMIES.
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Message Attributes

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